Try a Whole Meal in the Oven

By Mrs. Christine Frederick,
The Distinguished Authority on Household Efficiency.

THE oven used to be considered solely for baking purposes. But today one of the newest trends in cooking is to use the oven for preparing an entire meal. When we stop to think of it, there is no real need for using a separate burner for meat, vegetables, sauces and dessert. Such meals are most wasteful of fuel and of time as well because they require more constant pot-watching and attention. It is just as possible to boil and steam in the oven as to bake in it. Indeed, foods usually cooked "open kettle" fashion save their nutritive juice and taste much better if oven-cooked.

January is one of the best months in which to start the plan of cooking the whole meal in the oven. If the range, gas or electric, is fitted with a heat temperature control, so much the better, and so much more accurate the cooking. In any case, the thing to do is to plan a well-balanced meal adaptable to oven cooking, and, next, to determine which dishes should be put in first, which second, and soon, so as to take the greatest advantage of the heat.

The best menus for such dinners are those which include a casserole or scallope/ dish of meat. Thus all stews, baked meats and those of small pieces of meat with much sauce led themselves particularly well to the oven dinner. The vegetables may be added to the casserol after it has cooked a short peod, or they may be placed it their own baking dishes an/cooked separately. The housewif will be delighted at the wide asrtment of heat-resisting and fireproof utensils for oven cookes. She may select the heavy brown ovenware, the light transparent glassware, or varias models of opaque china. The difference between a "casserole" and a "baking dish" is that the former has a lid, while the latter is open and does not have a lid. One may also use the real scallop shells for attractive serving of au gratin dishes, or small individual ramekins which are custard cups with handles. The deep beanpot shape of ovenware is called a "marmite" and is suitable for cooking soup in the oven, as well as beans and other dishes.

It is easy to learn the trick of co-ordinating this kind of cooking so that one knows exactly which dish of the menu to put into the oven first. Generally the meat dish is placed first, and vegetables added to it, or laid on the rack about 40 minutes before serving time. Puddings may be cooked at the same time as meat and vegetables, but should be placed in the cooler parts of the oven. Desserts like apple dumplings and brown betty, candied sweet potatoes and all braised vegetables cook at the same temperature as the main casserole meat dish, that is, a moderate oven. The lids or covers should be left on at the beginning of the cooking to conserve juice and flavor, but may be removed for the last half hour to increase the browning of the top.

One of the chief advantages of oven-cooked dinners is that most of the preparation can be done many hours in advance. Indeed, the cooking itself may be started in the forenoon, and the foods left in their dishes in the oven for a final half-hour's reheating just before serving time. The housewife who wants to attend a club meeting or have a "Thursday off" can prepare an oven dinner and be assured that her family will have their usual appetizing hot meal on her return.

Let us take a few sample menus:

Dinner No. 1—Roast loin of pork (1½ hours), scalloped dry lima beans (1 hour), baked apples, raisin filling (45 minutes), stewed tomatoes (30 minutes).

Dinner No. 2—Pot roast (2½ hours), baked rice (1½ hours), braised red cabbage (1 hour), baked ginger pears (45 minutes).

Dinner No. 3—Vegetable and barley soup (3 hours), beefsteak and kidney pie with baking powder crust (2 hours), prune souffle (45 minutes).

"But how can I cook vegetables without water?" will be a question frequently asked in connection with oven cooking. Let me say again, that it is a most frightful mistake to boil vegetables in quantities of water and let their fragrance escape in the steam, and throw away the mineral salts dissolved in the cooking water. Vegetables should be steamed or cooked in as little water as possible. In oven cooking the clean and cut up vegetables are laid in a well-oiled casserole and a small quantity, about a cup, of water poured over them and the dish covered. This small amount is sufficient to start a kind of percolation of moisture from the vegetable to the lid and back again. It must not be forgotten that most vegetables have from 50 per cent to 80 per cent of water in their composition. They can practically cook themselves in their own juice.

"But isn't it expensive to keep the oven going for several hours?" Not at all. It is really less expensive than using three or four separate top burners as is the usual fashion. Once the oven is hot there is a great deal of retained heat within its insulated walls, whereas, in top-burner cooking this heat is wasted. Again, one must learn how to keep the temperature low, and to turn off the heat entirely so that the end of the meal will really be accomplished on retained heat, and not on a direct flame. To cook four or five dishes in a single oven, properly managed, is much more economical.

A final word about flavor. All the experts agree that the only difference between one food and another, from the point of view of taste, is the flavor. Take away the flavor, or really the aroma or perfume which make you think the food is flavored, and nothing remains. Thus, boiled food, food cooked with the steam and odor constantly escaping, is never flavorful food. On the other hand, oven foods are rich in aroma and in those volatile oils which please our sense of smell. The smell is literally cooked in, as it were, and thus the oven-cooked meal gives us better tasting food.

Appetizing Menus for the Week

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Breakfast	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*
Oranges, Bread Crumb Omelet, Graham Muffins, Coffee.	Broiled Sausages, Applesauce, Whole Wheat Tea Biscuit, Coffee.	Prunes with Lemon, Creamed Codfish, Toast, Coffee.	Sliced Oranges and Bananas, French Omelet, Corn Muffins, Coffee or Substitute.	Cereal with Dates, Buttered Toast, Coffee.	Prunes, Eggs Scrambled with Sausage, Reheated Rolls, Coffee.	Fruit, Cereal, Top Milk, Bread Crumb Waffles, Syrup, Coffee.
Luncheon	*Luncheon*	*Luncheon*	*Luncheon*	*Luncheon*	*Luncheon*	*Dinner*
Casserole of Bermuda Onions, Rolls, Fruit Jelly, Tea.	Cabbage Salad with Cheese Balls, Nut Bread, Tea.	Brussels Sprouts au Gratin, Quick Parker House Rolls, Raspberry Tarts, Tea.	Macaroni Italian Style, French Bread, Fruit Trifle, Tea.	Cream Soup, Croutons, Nut Bread, Orange Marmalade, Cream Cheese, Tea.	Cream of Spinach Soup, Croutons, Nut Bread, Orange Marmalade, Cream Cheese, Tea.	Bouillon, Roast Leg of Lamb, Steamed Potatoes, Buttered Spinach, Carrot Salad, Individual Apricot Pies, Half Cups Coffee.
Dinner	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	*Supper*	*Supper*
Veal Croquettes, Currant Jelly, String Beans, Creamed Potatoes, Peach Tapioca Pudding (Juice from Canned Peaches).	Meat Loaf, Baked Potatoes, Creamed Celery, Tomato Jelly Salad, Fruit Shortcake.	Pork and Beans, Lettuce Salad, California Dressing, Gingerbread with Fruit Sauce.	Steamed Halibut, Drawn Butter Sauce, Boiled Potatoes, Buttered Beets, Celery Salad, French Dressing, Chocolate Pudding.	Baked Potatoes, French Dressing, Apple Whip, Nut Oatmeal Cookies, *Supper* Oyster Stew, Toasted Crackers, Pineapple Jelly, Nut Cookies.	Shredded Cabbage, French Dressing, Apple Whip, Nut Oatmeal Cookies, *Supper* Oyster Stew, Toasted Crackers, Pineapple Jelly, Nut Cookies.	Oyster Stew, Tomato Rarebit, Lettuce and Brown Bread Sandwiches, Stewed Fruit.

Try These Tested Recipes

By Mary Lee Swann,
The Well-Known Writer and Lecturer on Cooking.

Bread Stuffing.

MIX 2½ cups bread crumbs, ¾ teaspoon salt, a few grains paprika and ¼ teaspoon pepper and ¼ teaspoon poultry seasoning. Add ½ cup melted butter or drippings and 1½ cups hot water and mix well.

Savory Cauliflower.

COOK a cauliflower in boiling salted water. When tender, drain and serve with the following sauce: Melt 2 tablespoons butter, add 3 tablespoons vinegar, ¼ teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoons finely chopped green pepper and 2 tablespoons finely chopped pimiento.

Cheese Balls.

SEASON cream cheese to taste with salt, paprika and cream and work until smooth. Shape in small balls and roll in grated American cheese. These are delicious with green salads.

Luncheon Spinach.

PRESS 1 can spinach through sieve or potato ricer. Season with salt, pepper and ½ tablespoon Worcestershire sauce. Pack into mold and set in pan of hot water. When thoroughly heated, turn out on serving dish, sprinkle with sifted hard-cooked egg yolk and sifted hard-cooked egg whites.

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A GOOD STYLE FOR SLENDER FIGURES (5993). The pattern is cut in 5 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure. A 38-inch size will require 4⅛ yards of 40-inch material if made with two flounces. If upper flounce is omitted 3⅜ yards will be required. For facing of contrasting material on front and neck edge, ½ yard 40 inches wide is required, cut lengthwise and pieced.

A STYLISH COAT DRESS FOR MATURE FIGURES (6019). The pattern is cut in 9 sizes: 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52 and 54 inches bust measure. A 42-inch size will require 4⅜ yards of 40-inch material. If collar is faced with contrasting material, 1¼ yards 22 inches wide is required, cut crosswise.

A JAUNTY TOP GARMENT FOR THE LITTLE MISS (6042). The pattern is cut in 3 sizes: 1, 2 and 3 years. A 2-year size will require 1½ yards of 40-inch material. To trim collar and cuffs, as illustrated, will require 1⅜ yards of fur banding.

A RECOMING FROCK FOR THE GROWING GIRL (6034). The pattern is cut in 4 sizes: 8, 10, 12 and 14 years. A 12-year size will require 2⅞ yards of 36-inch material, together with ⅞ yard of contrasting material for trimming bands, and facing on collar, cuffs and belt, cut lengthwise.

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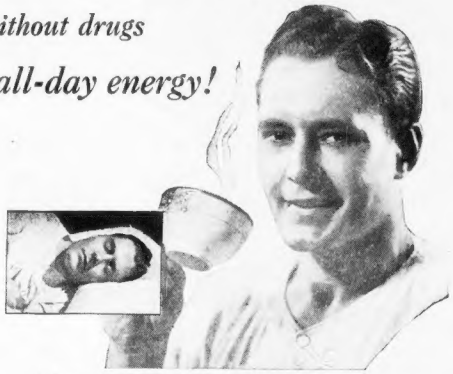

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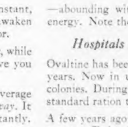
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